THE CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. *TOWN*,

CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.

NUMBER V.

THURSDAY, *February* 28, 1754.

Σκιᾶς ἐλαυνει λοιμος ἐχθιστος πολιν.

SOPH.

To Mr. TOWN.

SIR, *Batſon's Coffee-Houſe, Feb.* 26, 1754.

I MUST beg leave to trouble you on a moſt ſerious and melancholy ſubject; a ſubject which I fear will be attended with the moſt dreadful conſequences to the whole nation. Notwithſtanding the laſt mail brought the College poſitive aſſurances from the *French* King's phyſicians, that the late PLAGUE at *Rouen* was entirely ceaſed, I have the ſtrongeſt reaſons to apprehend that the contagion is already ſpread to this city. My own practice daily furniſhes me with lamentable inſtances, that manifeſtly indicate a peſtilential diſorder in the blood and humours.

I WAS firſt induced to ſuſpect that ſome Epidemical Diſtemper was taking root among us, from my being called

in to a noble patient, who (as the public prints have inform'd you) has lately been afflicted with a violent boil on his back. From this patient there have iſſued continually great quantities of corruption of a yellow hue. His complaint ſeems to be in ſome ſort conſtitutional, as it commonly breaks out with extraordinary virulence every ſeven year; and as this is the criſis, we cannot pronounce our noble patient out of danger, 'till he has got over the enſuing ſpring. It is moreover to be feared, that the contagion has likewiſe reached *Ireland*; where we hear that the beſt phyſicians are uſing the moſt forcing medicines, and are of opinion that nothing can relieve the unhappy people, 'till they have *voided a* STONE. A great man there labours alſo under the abovementioned complaint of having a *violent* BOYLE *on his back.*

I SHALL now proceed to give you the hiſtory of ſome other caſes, which have fallen under my notice, and are to me an indiſputable proof that the PLAGUE has got footing among us. It's malignancy ſhews itſelf particularly about the Court; and we are aſſured that ſome parts of the Country are alſo tainted with it. I have had the honour to attend ſeveral Members of Parliament, whoſe caſes are very deſperate. Some I found in a declining way, given over by all their friends; others are ſo weak, that they can't ſtand alone; and many are ſo reſtleſs, that they are continually turning from ſide to ſide. As I found they had great need of ſupport, I have adviſed them to drink plentifully of ſtrong liquors, and guard againſt the ill conſequences of a *Return.*

I VISITED the other day a young gentleman, who has lately been promoted to a command in the ſquadron deſigned for the *Eaſt Indies.* I found him in a moſt languiſhing condition, his ſpirits were quite depreſs'd, he had a violent palpitation of the heart, and the whole nervous ſyſtem was relax'd. I would have preſcribed the well-known diet-drink brought into practice by the late Biſhop of *Cloyne*; but he told me every thing went againſt his ſtomach

ſtomach that ſavoured of *Tar*. However, I at length prevailed on him to ſubmit to a long courſe of Sea Water. I have obſerv'd the ſame prognoſtics in ſome of our land officers; to whom I have recommended the frequent uſe of Exerciſe, together with a courſe of Steel, and a Powder compoſed of Nitre and Brimſtone.

A FRIEND of mine, one of the common-council men of this city, is infected to a ſtrong degree with the preſent peſtilence. His chief complaint is a *canine* appetite, and his wife aſſures me ſhe has often felt the wolf in his belly. The cauſe of this diſtemper is originally in the palate, and diſcovers itſelf by a watering of the mouth from the ſalival glands, and a grinding of the teeth as in the action of maſtication. This diſorder being very common in the city, and likely to ſpread among the Livery, I have directed him to *perform Quarentine* by abſtaining from fleſh during the preſent Lent.

I KNOW another, a very worthy alderman, who now lies in a moſt deplorable condition. He is ſwelled to a moſt enormous ſize; his whole face, and particularly his noſe, is cruſted over with fiery puſtules of the confluent kind. He is afflicted with an inſatiable thirſt, and is very ſubject to *epileptic* fits. I was ſent for laſt night, when one of theſe fits was very ſtrong upon him. He lay, to all appearance, dead on the floor, wallowing in the midſt of a fetid maſs, partly ſolid, partly fluid, which had iſſued from his mouth and noſtrils with repeated eructations. I would immediately have adminiſtred to him a proper doſe of *aq. font. tepefact.* but on offering him the draught he ſhew'd the ſtrongeſt ſymptoms of a confirmed *Hydrophobia*.

I WENT out of charity to ſee a poor tragic author (no reflection upon any of the profeſſion, Mr. TOWN) who has been obliged to keep his room all the winter, and is dying by inches of an inveterate *Atrophy*. By his extravagant ravings, ſudden ſtarts, incoherent expreſſions, and paſſionate exclama-

exclamations, I judged his diſorder to be ſeated in the brain, and therefore directed his head to be bliſter'd all over. I cured another, a comic author, of a lethargy, by making a revulſion of the bad humour from the part affected with ſtimulating cathartics. A ſhort ſquabby gentleman of a groſs and corpulent make was ſeiz'd with a kind of St. *Vitus*'s Dance, as he was practiſing Harlequin for the maſquerade: his whole body was convulſed with the moſt violent writhings, and irregular twitches; but I preſently removed his complaint by bleeding him in the foot.

THE PLAGUE, as I obſerved before, puts on different appearances in different ſubjects. A perſon of quality, one of the club at *White*'s, was ſeiz'd with the epidemical phrenzy raging there, which propagates itſelf by certain black and red ſpots. He had ſuffered ſo much loſs by continual evacuations, that his whole ſubſtance was waſted; and when I ſaw him he was ſo reduc'd, that there were no hopes of a recovery. Another nobleman caught the infection at *Newmarket*, which brought upon him ſuch a *running*, that he is now in the laſt ſtage of a *galloping* conſumption. A reverend divine, lately made a dignitary of the church, has unhappily loſt his memory, and is ſo blind withal, that he hardly knows any of his old acquaintance: the muſcles of his face are all contracted into an auſtere frown, his knees are ſtiff and inflexible, and he is unable, poor gentleman! to bend his body, or move his hand to his head. I have obſerv'd others ſeiz'd at times with a ſtrange kind of deafneſs; and at certain intervals I have found them ſo prodigiouſly hard of hearing, that tho' a tradeſman has bawled ever ſo loudly in their ears, it has had no effect upon them.

BY what means this PLAGUE has been introduc'd among us, cannot eaſily be aſcertained;—whether it was imported in the ſame band-box with the laſt new head, or was ſecretly convey'd in the plaits of an embroider'd ſuit:—but that it came over hither from *France*, plainly appears from the manner in which it affects our people of faſhion, (eſpecially

the

the ladies) who bear about them the moſt evident marks of the *French Diſeaſe*. This is known to affect the whole *habit of body*, and extends it's influence from head to foot. But it's ſtrongeſt attacks are levell'd at the face; and it has ſuch an effect upon the complexion, that it entirely changes the natural colour of the ſkin. At *Paris* the face of every lady you meet is beſmear'd with unguent, ceruſs, and plaiſter; and I have lately remarked with infinite concern the native charms of my pretty countrywomen deſtroyed by the ſame cauſe. In this caſe I have always propoſed calling in the aſſiſtance of a ſurgeon to pare off this unnatural *Epidermis* or Scarf-ſkin, occaſion'd by the ignorance of Empirics in the immoderate application of *Alteratives*.

FROM what I have been able to collect from obſervations on my female patients, I have found little variation in the effects of the PLAGUE on that ſex. Moſt of them complain of a laſſitude, a liſtleſsneſs, an uneaſineſs, pains they don't know where, vapours, hyſterics, want of reſt, want of ſpirits, and loſs of appetite: conſequently the ſame regimen may ſerve for all. I adviſe them to uſe a great deal of exerciſe in driving about the town, to dilute properly with tea, to perſpire freely at public places, and in their ſeaſons to go to *Bath*, *Tunbridge*, *Cheltenham*, or *Scarborough*.

I WAS indeed ſurpriz'd with an extraordinary new caſe the other night, when I was called out of bed to attend a Maid of Honour, who is frequently afflicted with fits of the mother. Her abdomen I found, upon examination, to be preternaturally diſtended: the tumour has been gradually increaſing; but I would not attempt to diſcuſs it, as it was not yet arrived at maturity. I intend ſoon to remove her into the country for a month, in order to deliver her from the complaint ſhe labours under.

I HAVE been induced, ſir, to write to you on this occaſion, as you are pleas'd to take this city under your immediate care. So alarming an evil calls upon us all to

oppoſe it's progreſs; for my own part, nothing ſhall deter me from a diligent diſcharge of the duty of my profeſſion, tho' it has already expoſed me to the greateſt dangers in the execution of it. An old captain of a man of war, who is grievouſly troubled with the *cholera morbus*, and overflowing of the gall, on my only hinting a Clyſter ſwore vehemently that I ſhould take one myſelf, and applying his foot directly to my fundament, kick'd me down ſtairs. This very morning I eſcaped almoſt by miracle from the contagion, which raged in the moſt violent degree through a whole family. The maſter and miſtreſs are both of them in a very high fever, and quite frantic and delirious: their tongues were prodigiouſly inflamed, the tip very ſharp, and perpetually vibrating without the leaſt intermiſſion. I would have preſcribed ſome cooling and lenitive medicines, but the huſband in the height of his frenzy flung my wig into the fire, and his wife fluiced me with extravaſated urine. As I retired with precipitation, I heard the ſame wild ravings from the nurſery, the kitchen, and every other quarter, which convinced me that the peſtilence had ſeiz'd the whole houſe. I ran out of doors as faſt as poſſible, reflecting with Terence,

- - - - - - - - Ipſa ſi cupiat Salus,
Servare prorsùs non poteſt hanc familiam.

UPON the whole, I may conclude with the Aphoriſm of *Hippocrates*; that "no people can poſſibly be afflicted with "ſo many and ſo terrible diſorders, unleſs the PLAGUE "is among them." I am, ſir, yours, &c.

B. G.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This Day is Publiſh'd,

(Very proper to be read by all who have ſeen, or intend to ſee the new Play)

THE *STORY* on which the new Tragedy is founded: Being a Deſcription of the ISLAND of *VIRGINIA*, with an Account of it's principal Rivers, Lakes, &c. and of the Manners and Cuſtoms of the People.

London: Printed for *T. Catchpenny.*

W

Printed for R. BALDWIN, at the *Roſe* in *Pater-noſter Row*; where Letters to the CONNOISSEUR are received.